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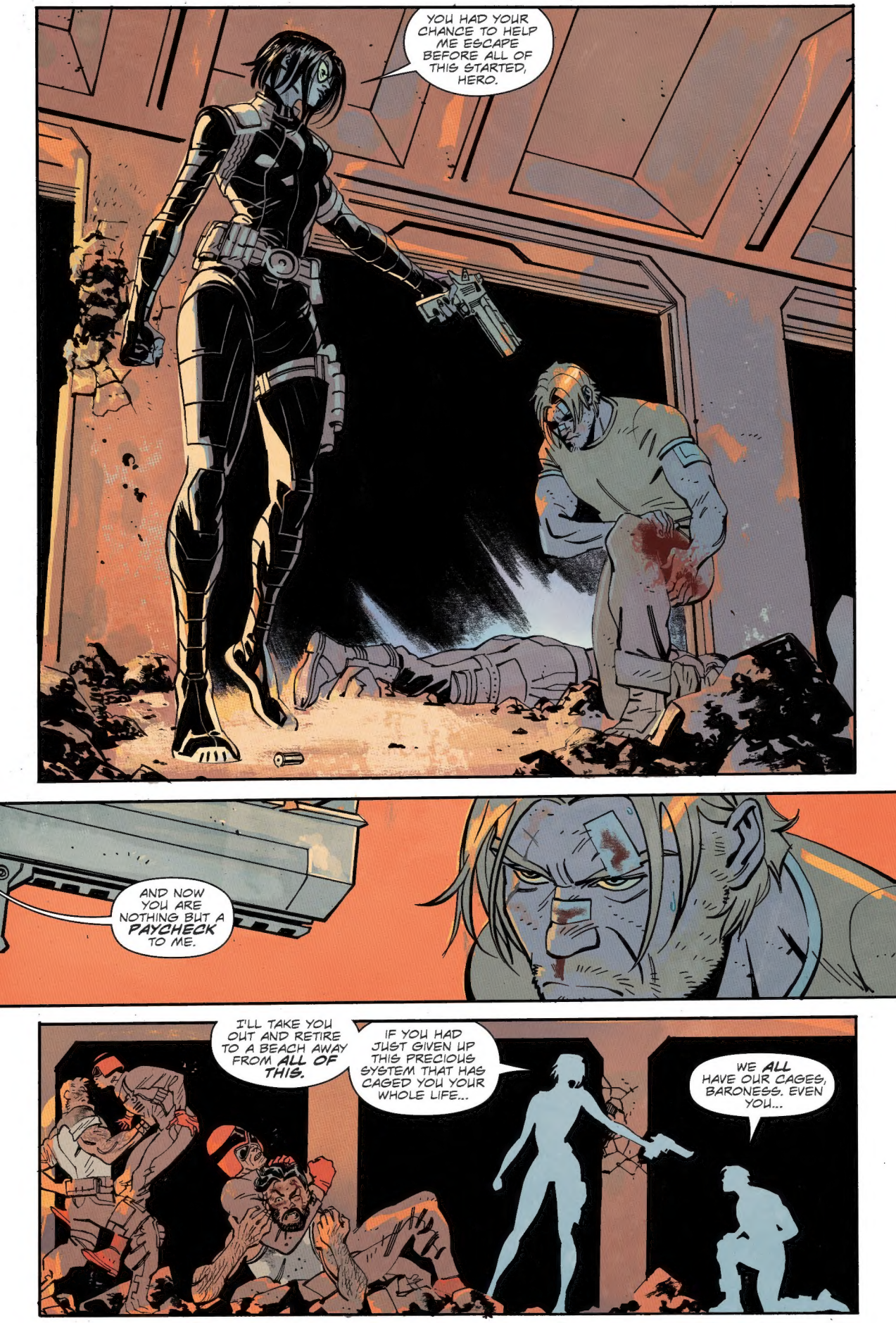
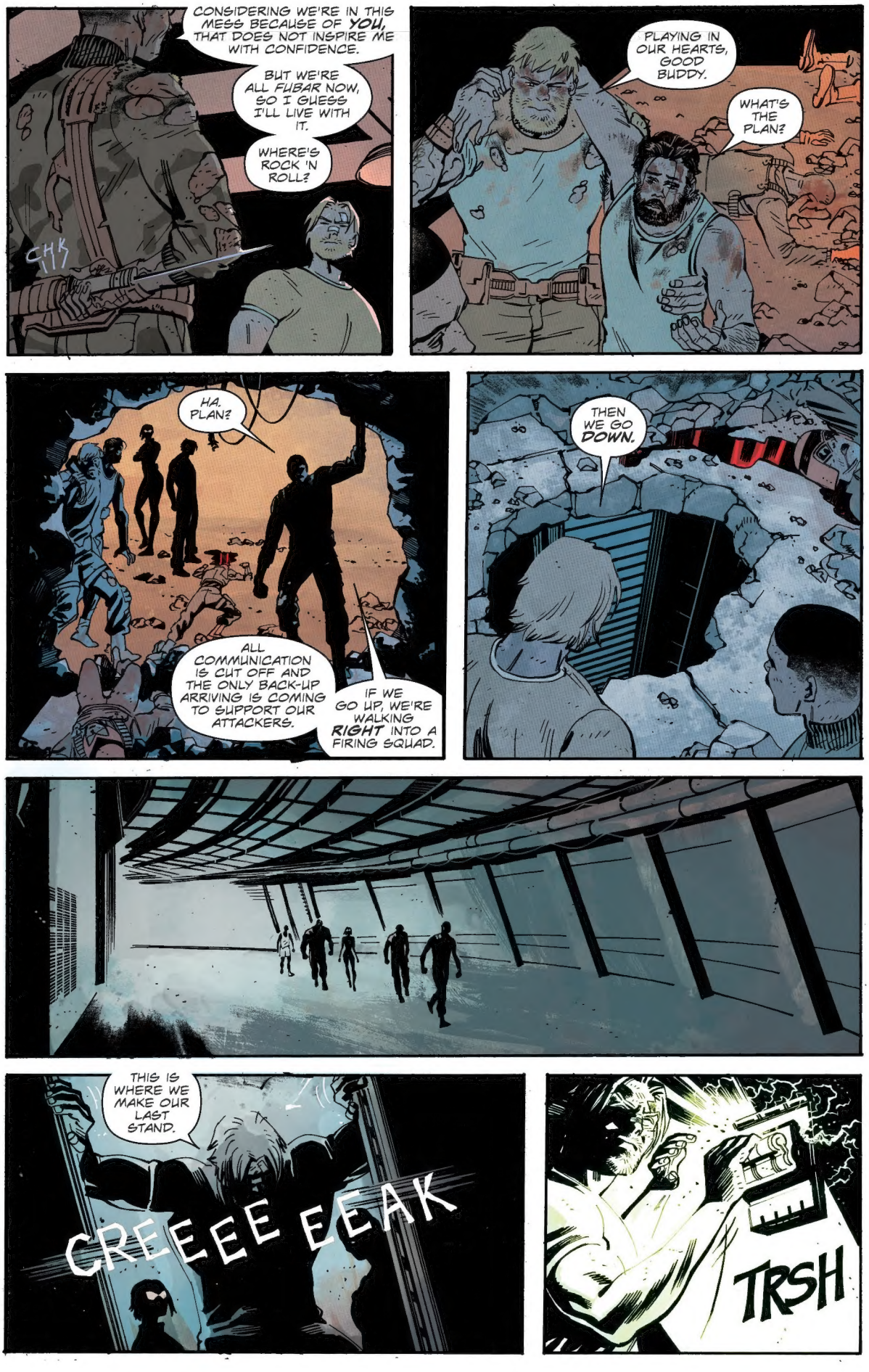
"THIS IS STALKER. DO YOU READ?!
"I'M AT THE PIT AND TAKING ON HEAVY FIRE WITH MORE FORCES ARRIVING.
"WE NEED BACK-UP NOW."
DAMMIT, NOTHING IS GETTING THROUGH...
CLIK!
CRAP.
HOPEFULLY, THEY'RE HAVING A BETTER TIME DOWN THERE THAN I AM UP HERE!


YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE TO HELP ME ESCAPE BEFORE ALL OF THIS STARTED, HERO.
AND NOW YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A PAYCHECK TO ME.
I'LL TAKE YOU OUT AND RETIRE TO A BEACH AWAY FROM ALL OF THIS.
IF YOU HAD JUST GIVEN UP THIS PRECIOUS SYSTEM THAT HAS CAGED YOU YOUR WHOLE LIFE...
WE ALL HAVE OUR CAGES, BARONESS. EVEN YOU...

YOU WERE A SPOILED RICH KID WHO REBELLED.
BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH.
YOU KEPT REBELLING. AGAINST EVERYTHING AROUND YOU, UNTIL THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT.
YOU'RE AFRAID THAT YOU'VE GONE PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN.
BUT LET ME TELL YOU, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GO BACK...
IS THIS ADVICE FOR ME OR YOU?
MAYBE... BUT...
YOU'RE NOT STUPID
YOU KNOW THE REAL DEAL HERE, RIGHT?
WITH THIS KIND OF MESS, THE PEOPLE AFTER ME WILL GO SCORCHED EARTH, AND YOU WILL GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT.
MAKE A CALL. HELP ME OR NOT.
OTHERWISE, STOP WASTING MY TIME AND PULL THE DAMN TRIGGER.

HEH.
IF YOU'RE IN HERE WITH ME, MAYBE YOU'RE NOT ALL THAT BAD.
HOW IS YOUR LEG?
AS LONG AS I DON'T PUT ANY WEIGHT ON IT OR TRY TO WALK, I THINK I'LL BE FINE.
BACK AWAY FROM DUKE, INMATE.
AT EASE, STALKER.
SHE'S WITH ME.


CONSIDERING WE'RE IN THIS MESS BECAUSE OF YOU, THAT DOES NOT INSPIRE ME WITH CONFIDENCE.
BUT WE'RE ALL FUBAR NOW, SO I GUESS I'LL LIVE WITH IT.
WHERE'S ROCK 'N ROLL?
CHK
PLAYING IN OUR HEARTS, GOOD BUDDY.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?
HA. PLAN?
ALL COMMUNICATION IS CUT OFF AND THE ONLY BACK-UP ARRIVING IS COMING TO SUPPORT OUR ATTACKERS.
IF WE GO UP, WE'RE WALKING RIGHT INTO A FIRING SQUAD.
THEN WE GO DOWN.
THIS IS WHERE WE MAKE OUR LAST STAND.
CREEEE EEAK
TRSH

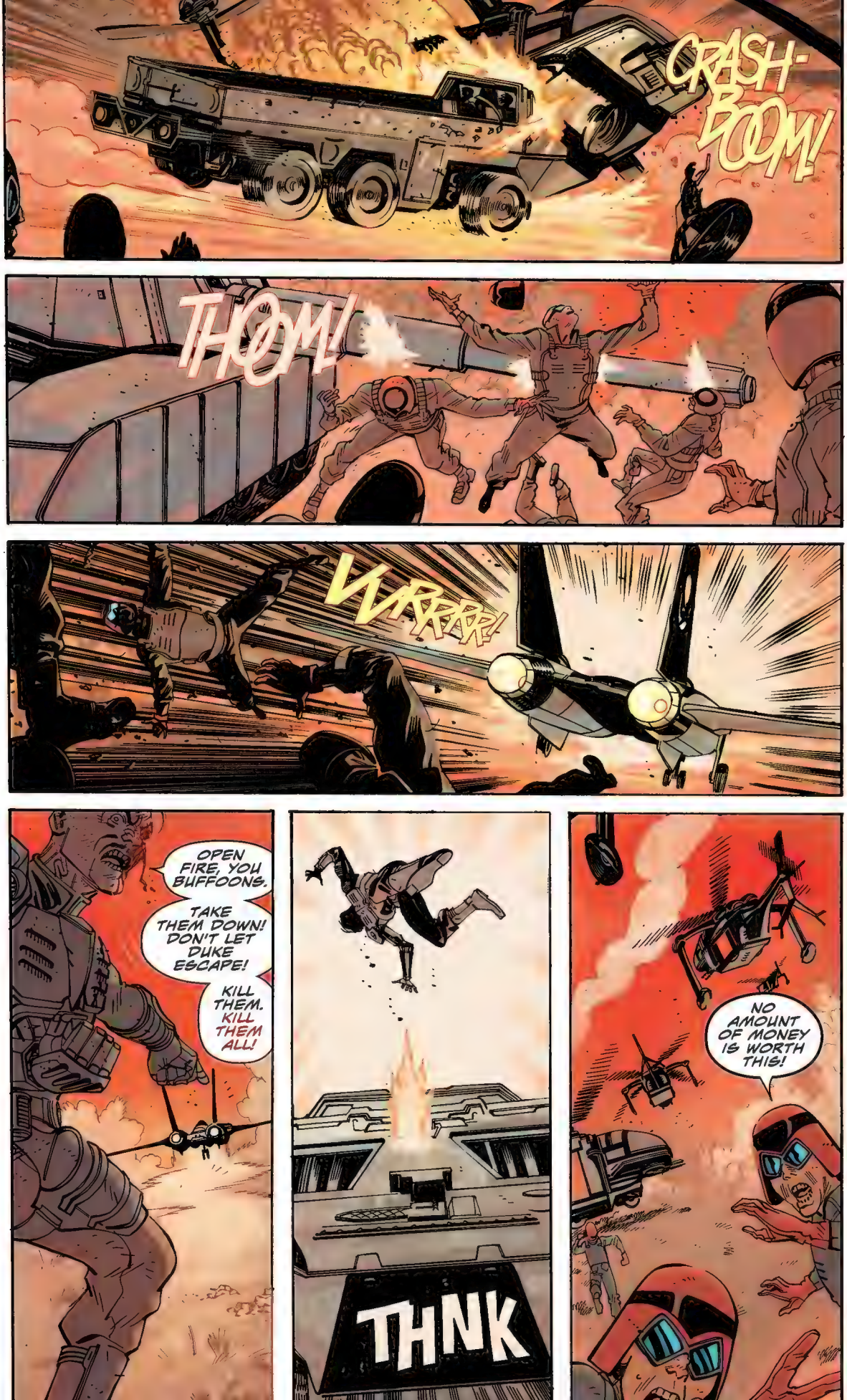
WHAT IS THIS?
A DUMPING GROUND FOR OLD GEAR. SOME OF IT WAS JUST DECOMMISSIONED, SOME OF IT WAS EXPERIMENTAL.
BUT NO AMMO. YIKES.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DRAGGING ME DOWN TO HELL...
BUT I'M IN HEAVEN.
YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?
YOU BUILD 'EM AND I BREAK 'EM?
READY THE NEXT WAVE. WE NEED TO HIT THEM HARD.
WHERE THE HELL IS BLUDD?
GET MERCER ON THE LINE NOW.

HE NEEDS TO TELL THAT BIG BOSS OF HIS THAT MY RATE JUST DOUBLED.
I DID NOT FACTOR IN THIS KIND OF HAZARD PAY WHEN I TOOK THE HIT...
OH DAMN, WHAT HAPPENED...?
=UK.=
WE NEED TO GET YOU TO A MEDIC...
NO!
BOMB IT TO THE GROUND. DESTROY IT ALL.
THEN WE'LL GO FISHING FOR ANY SURVIVORS.
IF YOU FIND THE WOMAN'S BODY, LEAVE HER FOR ME.
SHE OWES ME AN EYE.
TRSHH
NOW WHAT?!

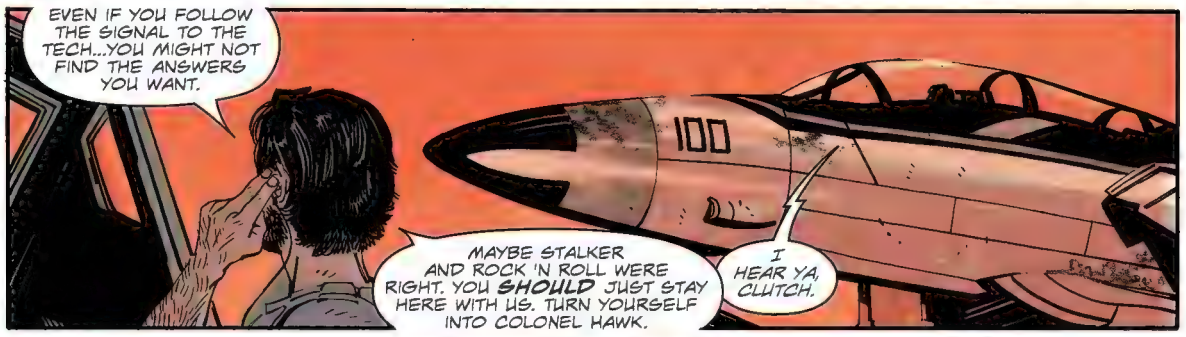
WARZONE

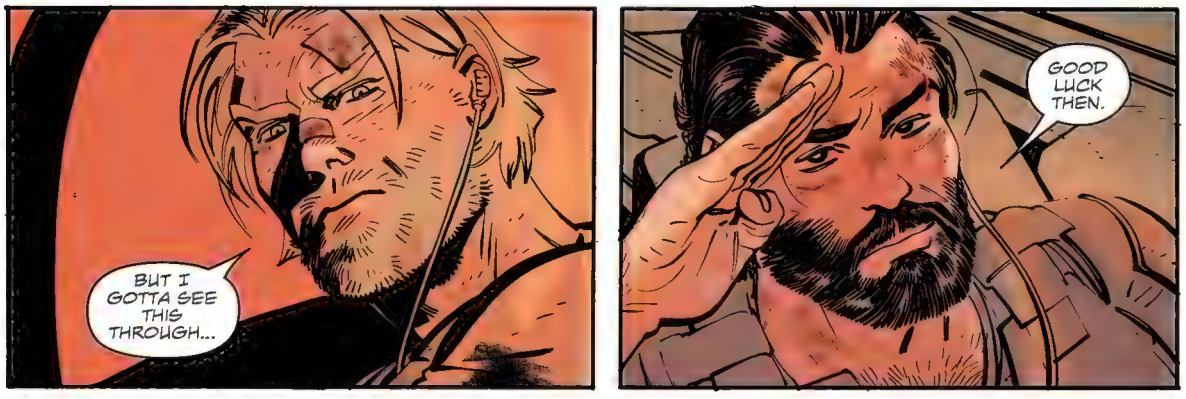
BLOODY HELL!

DEMOLITION DERBY TIME, BABY!

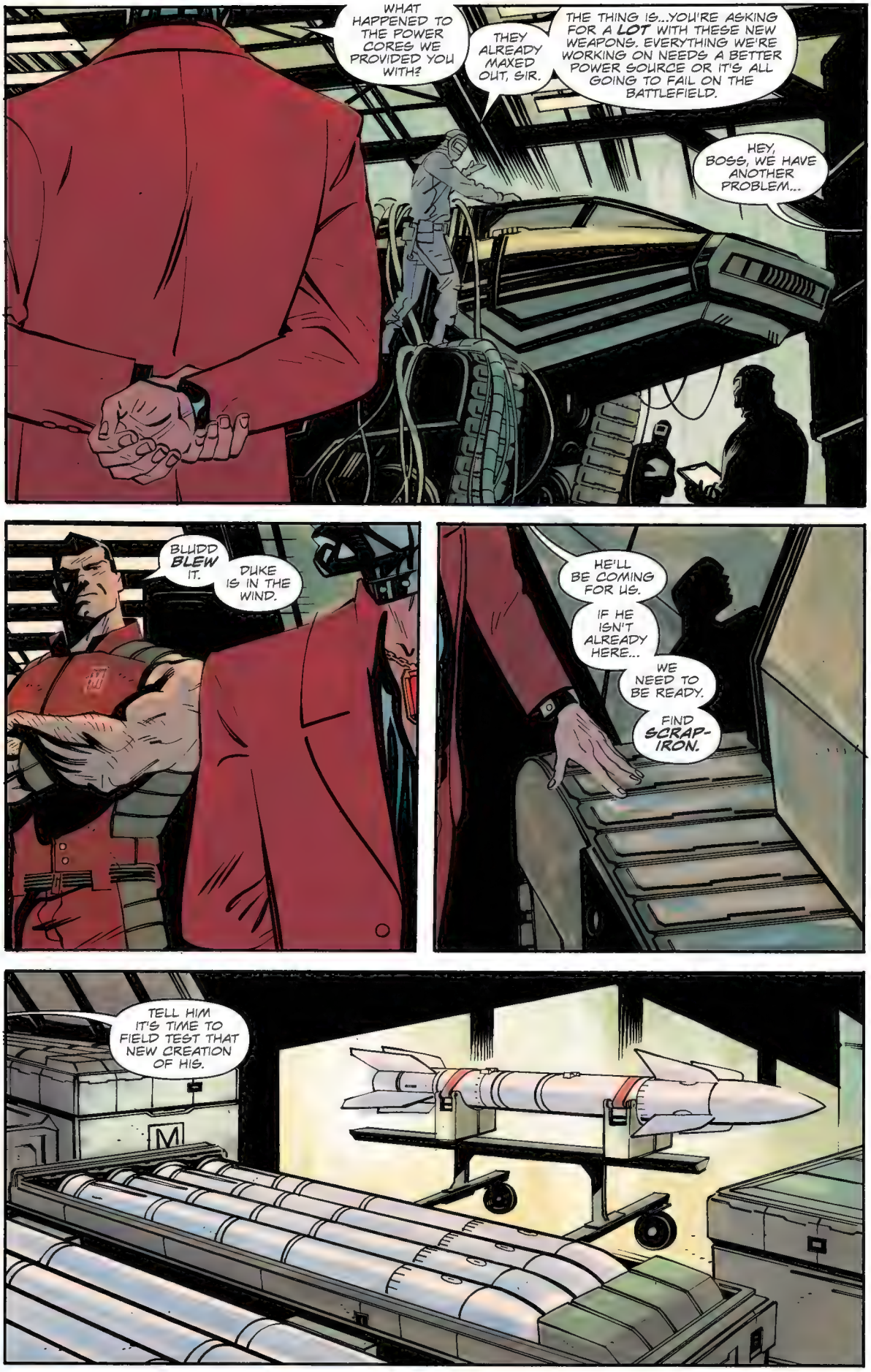

CRASH-
BOOM!
THOOM!
VVRRRRR!
OPEN FIRE, YOU BUFFOONS.
TAKE THEM DOWN! DON'T LET DUKE ESCAPE!
KILL THEM. KILL THEM ALL!
THNK
NO AMOUNT OF MONEY IS WORTH THIS!

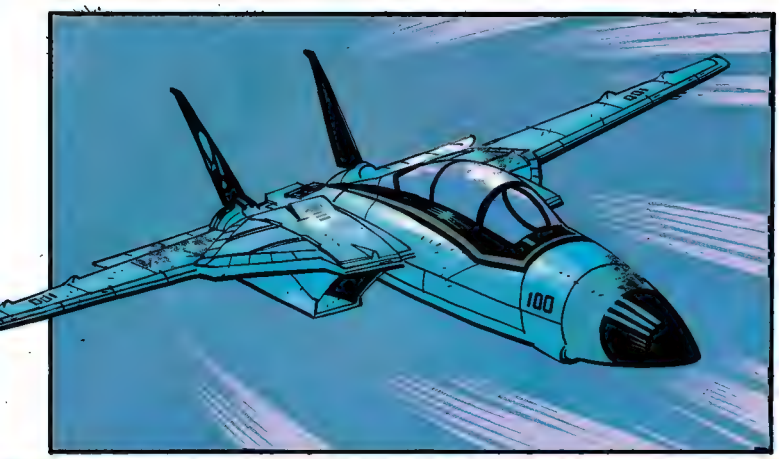
THANK YOU FOR THE ESCAPE!
HOPE I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!
HAWK IS NOT GOING TO BE HAPPY WITH THIS.
THAT'S ENOUGH COVERAGE. YOU'RE CLEAR FOR TAKE-OFF, GOOD BUDDY.
BUT LISTEN TO ME FOR A SEC, DUKE.
K-CHNK


EVEN IF YOU FOLLOW THE SIGNAL TO THE TECH...YOU MIGHT NOT FIND THE ANSWERS YOU WANT.
MAYBE STALKER AND ROCK 'N ROLL WERE RIGHT. YOU SHOULD JUST STAY HERE WITH US. TURN YOURSELF INTO COLONEL HAWK.
I HEAR YA, CLUTCH.


BUT I GOTTA SEE THIS THROUGH...
GOOD LUCK THEN.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT NEEDS MORE POWER?"


WHAT HAPPENED TO THE POWER CORES WE PROVIDED YOU WITH?
THEY ALREADY MAXED OUT, SIR.
THE THING IS...YOU'RE ASKING FOR A LOT WITH THESE NEW WEAPONS. EVERYTHING WE'RE WORKING ON NEEDS A BETTER POWER SOURCE OR IT'S ALL GOING TO FAIL ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
HEY, BOSS, WE HAVE ANOTHER PROBLEM...
BLUDD BLEW IT.
DUKE IS IN THE WIND.
HE'LL BE COMING FOR US.
IF HE ISN'T ALREADY HERE...
WE NEED TO BE READY.
FIND SCRAP-IRON.
TELL HIM IT'S TIME TO FIELD TEST THAT NEW CREATION OF HIS.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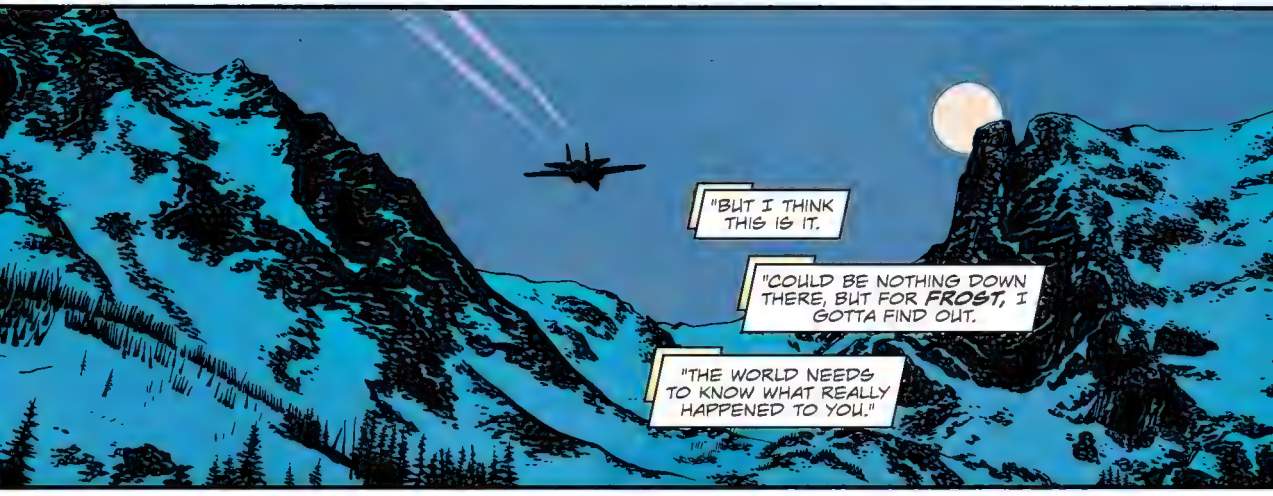
AT LEAST THE BLEEDING STOPPED...
OKAY... THE DEVICE THAT BURKHART GAVE ME WAS CONFISCATED WHEN ROCK 'N ROLL AND STALKER GOT ME...SO THIS MIGHT BE A SHOT IN THE DARK...


"BUT I THINK THIS IS IT.
"COULD BE NOTHING DOWN THERE, BUT FOR **FROST,** I GOTTA FIND OUT.
"THE WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO YOU."

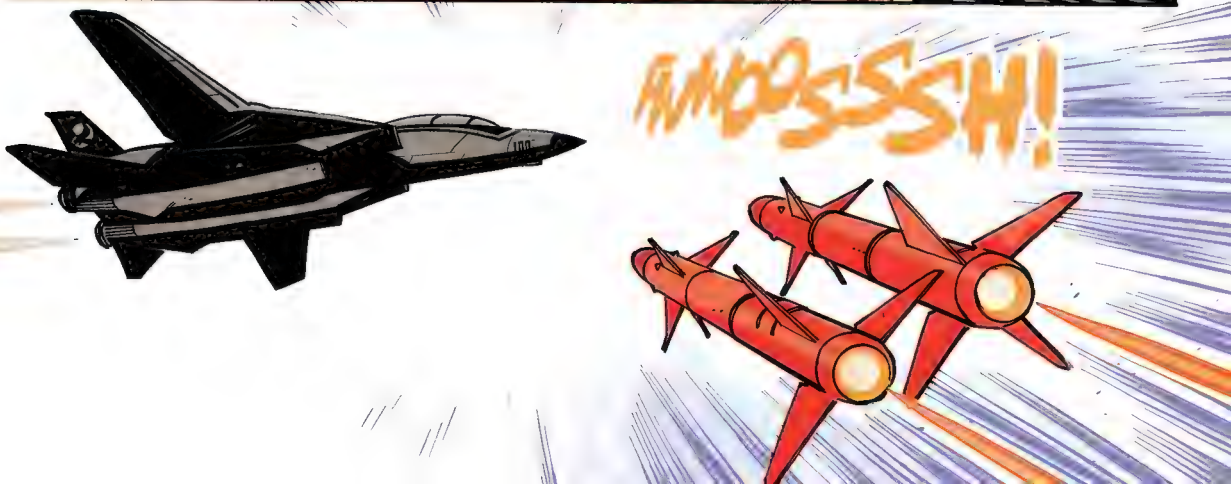
I NEED TO KNOW WHY THEY LIED TO YOUR FAMILY...
WHY THEY LIED TO **ME...**

TTRSSSHHH

"YOU WERE RIGHT, DESTRO.
"I SEE OUR HERO..."

HOW ABOUT WE TURN ON SOME LIGHTS TO HELP HIM WITH HIS LANDING?

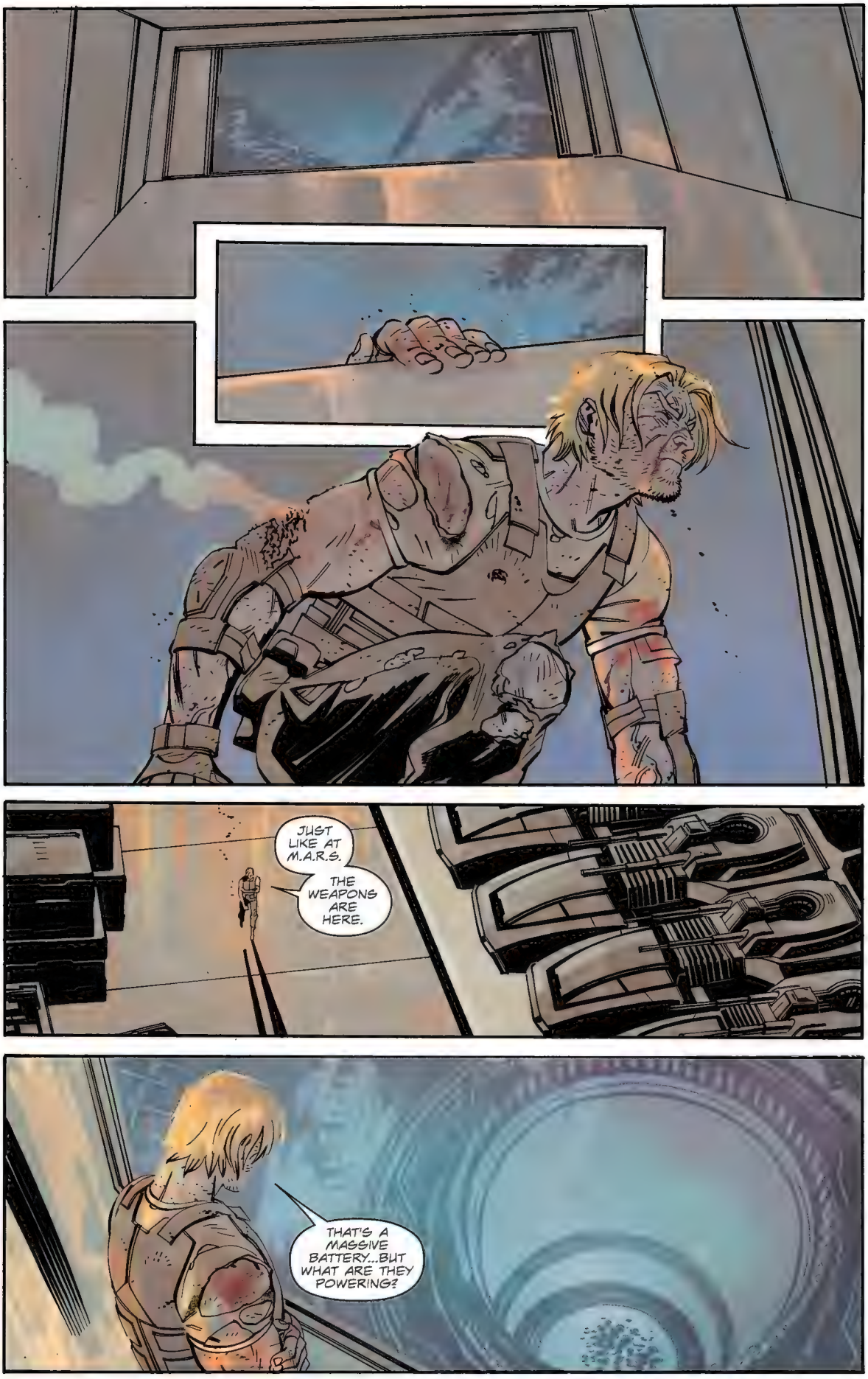
BOOM!
BOOM!

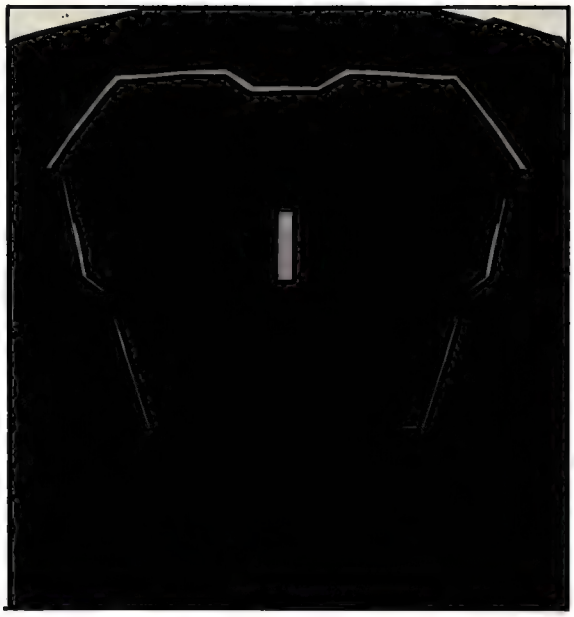

WHOOSSSH!

NICE OF THEM TO ROLL OUT THE WELCOME WAGON!
CHOOOOM!
C'MONN!!!
WHOOOOSH
KA-BOOM
$#*%!
KA-BOOM

CRASH!
BRILLIANT.
SCRAP-IRON--
UPDATE.

NO ONE IS LIVING THROUGH...
HM...
NO ORGANIC MATTER DETECTED
ARGH!
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STOP THIS GUY?!

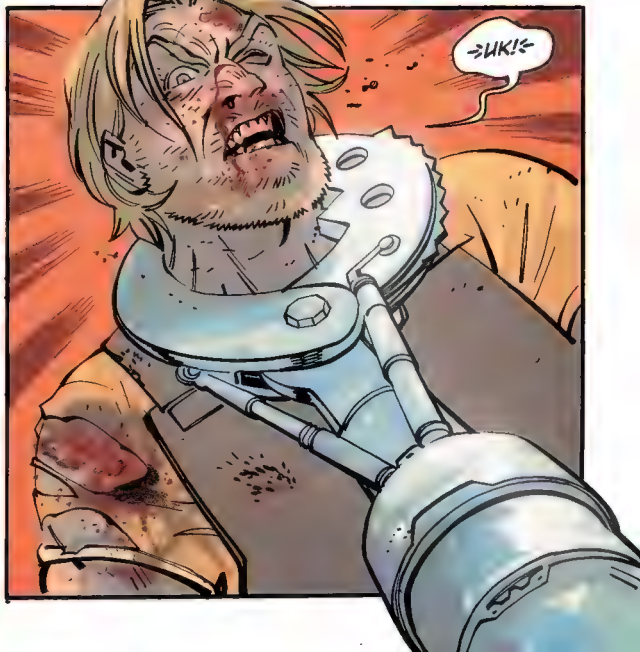

JUST LIKE AT M.A.R.S.
THE WEAPONS ARE HERE.
THAT'S A MASSIVE BATTERY...BUT WHAT ARE THEY POWERING?



I KNOW YOU'RE WATCHING ME. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME...

YOU BUILT THAT DAMN ROBOT THAT KILLED MY FRIEND!
YOU CAN HIDE ALL YOU WANT! NOT ONLY AM I GOING TO TELL THE WHOLE WORLD ABOUT YOU...

I'M KILLING YOUR FLYING ROBOT!


-UK!-

TO BE CONTINUED...

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO

[redacted]

GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back! We have one issue left and Duke's about to face his biggest challenge yet—yes, that's a B.A.T., Destro's signature Battle Android Trooper. This is Sean, promising more surprises in the finale to the Energon Universe's first G.I. Joe miniseries. What do you say, Josh?

HEY! It's a B.A.T. Didn't Tom draw some awesome action and vehicles in this issue? I was always a sucker for the awesome vehicles in G.I. Joe, and it was a goal of mine with this series to get as many as I can in here. This was just a taste of what is to come. Thank you to everyone who enjoys what we're doing and have jumped on this awesome Energon train!

Yo Joe!

When Oblivion Song ended, I subscribed to Void Rivals without hesitation, unaware of the rising Energon Universe that I was about to immerse myself into... and I'm hooked!

As a child of the late 80s and early 90s as well as a devotee of Skybound productions in the 21st century, I'm glad to see these properties infused with a new sense of connectedness and heart.
Regarding Duke #2, props to Jordie Bellaire on using color to enhance and drive the storytelling... for example the transition in the last few pages that shows us just where in the Pit we find Baroness.

Shout to Jordie, who's worked color magic across this mini. She's captured the perfect tone and made this comic look extra special.

Yeah, Jordie has been killing it. Her colors totally help us tell the story.

As for a letters column title, there can be only one: Cuppa Joe! (Or Cup O' Joe)

Cheers,
Brian Hans

DUKE isn't running long enough to get a proper letters page name, but… don't hate it!

I'll always remember that was what Joe Quesada called his CBR column and his popular convention panels. So I'm not against it, haha. But it's always the first thing I think of when I hear it.

Hello,

Some major concerns regarding Duke # 2. Are we following GI Joe canon here, or is this an alternative universe? Because some glaring, awful mistakes happened in issue #2, one that any long time Joe fan will find annoying.

1. Rock n Roll and Clutch are best friends, and have been featured together in almost every single appearance since the 1980's. So why then did the writer of Duke # 2 decide it was a good idea to have Rock n Roll force Clutch off the road, knock him unconscious through the crash, and then pretend like they don't know each other for the remainder of the story?

2. Why did Duke talk about The Pit being decommissioned in the 1980's, but then moments later act like he's meeting Stalker and Rock n Roll for the first time? He would have known them on the Joe team in the 1980's. He's had countless adventures with them since the 1980's.

Yes, I know in this age of multi-universes and alternative realities, that comic writers have decided everything is fair game. But this story in issue # 2 just doesn't make any sense. And it's a punch in the face to the long time fans who stuck with Larry Hama's work all these years. Hey Larry Hama, are you out there? Can we CC you on this email? Someone at the Duke comic team is destroying all of your decades of work.

Please fix.

Howard

The Energon Universe is a separate continuity from Larry's ARAH run- which is still going VERY strong with #305 hitting stores last week. We have a lot planned with Larry, so stayed tuned for some BIG news hitting soon.

However, the EU is reimagining Duke, Clutch, Rock 'n Roll, etc, using elements from Larry's run, the Sunbow cartoon, and other iterations of the franchise to create a new experience by starting before Joe and Cobra were formed… then mixing these characters up with TRANSFORMERS and VOID RIVALS. So will Clutch and Rock 'n Roll become best buds in the EU? Most likely. We want to stay true to the core of these characters while still delivering a new and surprising reading experience for all.

Like Sean said, this is a fresh start to this new universe. I totally respect love and passion for canon and continuity that comes before. I feel the same way about a lot of properties, which is why it's so exciting for Larry's ARAH title and

story to be continuing there.

As an 80s kid, I only ever started exploring G.I. Joe as an adult and as a tangent to my Transformers fandom. Of course, after reading some 130-odd issues of the original RAH run and watching all the original series, I have quite an affection for the property and characters in their own rights. But I still like the idea of it being adjacent to, and occasionally intersecting with, my favorite alien robots. So I love the fact that so many of the minds behind the current Energon Universe feel the same way. The integration between Joes and TFs has been a delight to discover, and I didn't even realize until while writing this that Duke 2 might just be the first Energon Universe book without a single Transformers character somewhere.

That's true! The Transformers are still unknown to most of Earth's population, so when they show up outside their book, it should feel like a big deal.

We're making sure these stories breathe and build in an organic way. You'll see how everything continues to connect as we go.

Regardless, I just wanted to express my appreciation for the books, especially for all the unexpected turns you've been taking in your storytelling. I'm sure editorial has some limits on what kinds of things you can or can't do, but you've already done so many things I thought would be disallowed that everything seems possible, every life is potentially on the line, and the only thing we readers can do is wait pantingly for the next month's issue

Until next time,
YO JOE!
and
COOOOBRAAAAALALALA
Jon M. Wilson

The EU is a full collaboration between Skybound, Hasbro, and the talent creating these comics. At Skybound, the editor's job to create the best atmosphere for talent to create fun, exciting comics… to make the best possible version of the comic… and that's really the philosophy that Robert and Hasbro have encouraged, as well. We're doing things I never thought possible, and we're only just getting started.

That was a big appeal to me, too. To start fresh but change things up in a way that is true to its spirit and make things a bit unpredictable. These are the kinds of books that make me go to the comic book store every week.

Greetings!

This my first time writing in like this! I grew up with G1 transformers and G.I. Joe ARAH and have recently been drawn into the energon universe in a big way! I've read all current issues of Transformers, Void Rivals, Cobra Commander, and Duke. I am so impressed with where the story has gone so far. About the future...

1). With the first appearance of The Baroness taking place, will there be any more G1 appearances?

Yes. We're trying not to introduce too many characters at a time, but we'll be steadily introducing core Joe and Cobra characters, as needed.

I'm trying to get as many in here as I can. Trust me. I want to write all of the awesome G.I. Joe characters.

2). I have heard rumors that once Cobra Commander and Duke have concluded their runs, there will be a standalone G.I. Joe series (separate from ARAH) starting that is within the energon universe. Any comment?

I don't want to screw up the announcement, but there should be news hitting about what comes after COBRA COMMANDER and DUKE very soon (if it's not already out there).

3). Will we see crossovers from Void Rivals into Duke and/or Cobra Commander? To date, Void Rivals seems somewhat marooned in this EU.

Eventually, yes.

Many Thanks,
Doug H.

Next issue, Duke's in for the fight of his life!

-Sean

Next month, the fight for freedom continues! And some fun surprises! Thanks for reading!

-Josh

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THEY SAY IT'S THE MOST PEACEFUL WAY TO DIE.
THEY SAY YOU FEEL **WARM,** THAT THE BRAIN **RELAXES** AS IT'S DEPRIVED OF OXYGEN.
WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
THERE'S NO RETURNING TO THE WOMB.
NO GENTLE EMBRACE BY THE VOID.
JUST DROWNING.
SCREAMING FOR **AIR,** CLAWING FOR **LIFE** WITH EVERY FIBER OF YOUR MUSCLES.

AND THEN YOU'RE DEAD.

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